



TEXAS

AUSTIN

Austin Independent School District
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Program Overview

The Austin Independent School District is exploring alternative teacher compensation through a program called the Strategic Compensation Initiative. The compensation plan is designed to raise student achievement, improve teacher recruitment and retention, build the knowledge of teachers and principals, and recognize exemplary practices. The district collaborated with the local teachers association and a broad range of stakeholders through a 26-member Compensation and Support Task Force to develop the Strategic Compensation Initiative. The design process included discussions with other school districts; presentations by experts; and surveys, interviews, and focus groups with teachers, principals, and parents. A portion of the district's maintenance and operations tax is allocated to fund the initiative, providing approximately \$4.3 million annually.

The district is implementing the Strategic Compensation Initiative gradually, with an initial pilot of nine schools in 2007-08 school year. An 11-member Strategic Compensation Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the district, teachers association, Chamber of Commerce, university, and community organizations, oversees implementation and evaluation of the pilot and will design the final version of the plan. Participation in the pilot requires approval from 67 percent of teachers in a school. AISD officials added two additional schools for the 2008-09 school year, and plan to add seven more schools for the following school year.

The compensation plan consists of multiple rewards for teachers:

- **Recruitment and retention bonuses.** The district offers \$1,000 per year for the first three years that a teacher teaches in a high-need pilot school, \$3,000 per year for four to six years, and \$6,000 per year for seven or more years.
- **Teacher performance bonuses.** A teacher can earn up to \$3,000 per year for achieving two student learning objectives that he or she sets, with the approval from a school administrator, at the beginning of the school year.
- **School performance bonuses.** Teachers can earn \$2,000 per year for school performance in reading and \$3,000 per year for performance in mathematics if student achievement growth for the school exceeds growth for comparable schools.



- **Professional growth stipends.** The district provides a stipend of up to \$5,000 per year for teachers who serve as mentors through the district's mentoring program for novice teachers.
- ***Take One!* bonus.** The district provides a bonus of up to \$400 for teachers who participate in the *Take One!* component of the certification process for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Based on the full certification process, participants (either teachers or principals) compile and submit one portfolio entry of their teaching practice which includes a videotaped sample of their teaching as well as a written commentary explaining their instructional decisions. Participants can then keep the score that they receive on their *Take One!* submission and use it if they choose to apply for full certification at a later date.

Program Information

- [AISD REACH brochure](#)
- [Strategic Compensation Website](#)
- [Strategic Compensation Initiative Description](#)
- [Evaluation of the Austin Strategic Compensation Initiative](#)

Select Articles and Reports

- *Austin American–Statesman* (November 6, 2008). [Central Texas Voters Value Schools and Accountability.](#)
- *Austin American–Statesman.* (October 31, 2008). [Educators to Get Bonuses Today](#)